DATA GEMS: How to Extract Data from the Census API Transcript

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Hi, I'm Gerson Vasquez. In this data gem we'll be looking at the Census developers page with the goal of ultimately unlocking the API and creating custom data extracts. With custom data extracts you can eventually create things like data visualizations, charts, and graphs and many other things.

Let's begin by starting on the census.gov/developers page. Right away, you see, request a key on the left side. Which we highly suggest you request a key. It's easy, it's free and will really unlock the opportunities available within the API.

Next, I'm going to go to available API's, and in this case, I'm going to go to a data set that I'm very familiar with the American Community Survey 5-year data. As you scroll down, you can read descriptions not only on the ACS the American Community Survey but also on the different types of tables that are contained within the API.
In particular today I'm going to go to a very popular data table; one that was featured in another data gem, which is the data profiles.

The best way to start we found is to go through the examples and support a geography link at the bottom of data profiles bullets. As you go there, you'll see different options available to you.

In particular, I wanted to feature a few things, which is the variables; and as you click on that, you will see a lot of variables start to populate. These are actually the variables for the entire data profiles on ACS available through the Census API.

You'll see, that there are many that go down, thousands actually. And this code on the left is really what we're looking at when ultimately leading to an API call.

I'm going to take a step back now and go over to the examples which is really going to give you a great opportunity to look at the actual structure of the API call.

In this case, as an example, for instance, in states, they've actually pulled this DP 04001E. Which is actually the code on that other variable page, for total housing units from the housing characteristics profile of data profiles.

 If I would click on this, it will actually give me that total housing unit, for all the states and that's how easy it is. So, as I go back, I would want to remember this call. Look at the structure and instead or in addition to the DP04001 the total housing units, I may add or replace it with other variables that I select from the variable list. Plug those in, and run the API call again and you should be able to extract the data at that point.

 I hope you enjoyed this data gem, for more videos like this you can go to census.gov/academy. And don't forget to subscribe for more updates.

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